

MINUTES OF THE SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Jean Schodorf at 1:30 p.m. on February 9, 2010, in Room 152-S of the Capitol.

All members were present except:

- Senator Anthony Hensley- excused
- Senator Tim Owens- excused
- Senator Chris Steineger- excused
- Senator John Vratil- excused

Committee staff present:

- Theresa Kiernan, Office of the Revisor of Statutes
- Martha Dorsey, Kansas Legislative Research Department
- Sharon Wenger, Kansas Legislative Research Department
- Dorothy Gerhardt, Committee Assistant

Conferees appearing before the Committee:

- Larry A. Isaak, President, Midwestern High Education Compact
- Dale Dennis, Deputy Commissioner, Kansas Department of Education

Others attending:

See attached list.

Presentation: Midwestern Higher Education Compact

Larry A. Isaak, President, Midwestern High Education Compact (Attachment 1), appeared before the members with a presentation explaining MHEC. The Compact was created by the Council of State Governments' Midwest Legislative Conference in 1991. The 12 eligible Midwestern states defined by the Compact passed legislation to become members. MHEC services are available to all 907 Midwest institutions of public and private non-profit higher education. Services include competitive pricing opportunities for technology hardware, software, property insurance, and grants for energy and health care savings.

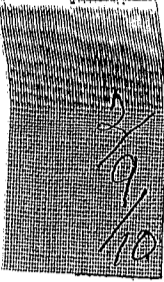
Mr. Isaak reported the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation has awarded \$100,000 to the Midwestern Higher Education Compact to explore the creation of a multi-state credential repository to reduce student time to degree and promote the completion of degrees in progress or on hold. The initiative, titled the Midwest Credential Repository for Education, Skills, and Training, or Midwest-CREST, would promote portability of academic credits, advance the recognition of the various means by which college-level competencies are developed, and facilitate the mobility of human capital between and among all of the Midwestern states.

He also discussed the fact that studies indicate the United States is losing ground to other countries in the proportion of its workforce with a college degree. To help close this gap MHEC has contracted with the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems to build a model to predict what would happen to the credentials gap if different inputs and throughputs were to change.

A short question and answer session followed.

The next meeting is scheduled for February 10, 2010.

The meeting was adjourned at 02:30 p.m.





The Midwest Credential Repository for Education, Skills, and Training (Midwest-CREST)

Accelerating degree completion through improved mobility, transferability, and application of credits and credentials

The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation has awarded \$100,000 to the Midwestern Higher Education Compact to explore the creation of a multi-state credential repository to reduce student time to degree and promote the completion of degrees in progress or on hold. The initiative, titled the Midwest Credential Repository for Education, Skills, and Training, or Midwest-CREST, would promote portability of academic credits, advance the recognition of the various means by which college-level competencies are developed, and facilitate the mobility of human capital between and among all of the Midwestern states.

Midwest-CREST would provide citizens with an opportunity to use a web-based platform to bank or store the college credits they have earned and to document learning they have achieved through workplace training, community education, and other formalized experiences. Incorporating elements of e-portfolios, the “deposits” made to Midwest-CREST would be documented and organized into standard “transcripts,” which would then be made available to colleges and universities to assess and “bid” for the opportunity to facilitate the completion of a degree. Students could receive bids from multiple institutions offering degree completion through a variety of modalities, including classroom-based and online courses, competency assessments, credit by examination, residencies, etc. Students would then be able to evaluate the multiple offers and choose one based on whatever combination factors are important to them (cost, flexibility, accessibility, number of courses required, etc.).

The proposal is grounded in the belief that increased portability of credit and improved translation of learning into meaningful credentials can improve the employment prospects of Midwestern citizens and promote economic development through facilitating the interstate mobility of human capital. Implementation of the exploratory initiative will be organized to achieve three major outcomes: 1) completion of a feasibility study; 2) creation of a plan for potential implementation and sustainability; and 3) development of a set of recommendations with a supporting plan of action. The feasibility study will include:

- an inventory of existing technologies and technological requirements;
- an assessment of state and institutional level practices and related policies;
- an assessment of needs and potential utilization of the platform by degree seekers and colleges and universities; and
- identification of the scope and type of marketing and outreach required to generate sufficient knowledge and use of the platform.

MHEC’s partners in the initiative are the Institute for Academic Alliances at Kansas State University and the Brookings Institution’s Great Lakes Economic Initiative. While the grant runs through December 31, 2010, recommendations will be presented to the MHEC commission at its annual meeting November 16-17, 2010.

*Senate Education
2-9-10
Attachment 1*



MHEC Partnering with NCHEMS on Planning Tool to Help States “Close the Gap” in Postsecondary Credentials

The United States is losing ground to other countries in the proportion of its workforce with a college degree. Given the relationship between educational level, employment and growth, this increasing credentials gap threatens the future economic competitiveness of our nation. In order to maintain pace with top performing countries the United States will need to produce a projected 15 million additional degrees and other postsecondary credentials by 2025. President Obama referenced this gap in a speech to Congress earlier this year.

To help states close the gap MHEC has contracted with the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems (NCHEMS)—and with the support of Lumina Foundation—to build a model to predict what would happen to the credentials gap if different inputs and throughputs were to change. For example, what would happen if college completion rates were to change by a certain amount? What would happen if high school graduation rates were to change? What would happen if there were changes in postsecondary participation rates of particular segments of the population? What would be the impact of closing participation and completion gaps among different socioeconomic groups?

An advisory committee comprised of SHEEO agency executives and other potential users of the resulting product will work with NCHEMS to develop a predictive model for each MHEC state that will:

- Report the size of the projected attainment gap in each year from 2010 to 2025.
- Create the model for each state constructed with data unique to the state. The model will be dynamic, enabling states to explore scenarios of their own creation and to determine how changes to selected inputs and throughputs will contribute to achievement of the state’s attainment goals.
- Determine the extent to which the gap would be closed if input and throughput variable values were equated to best state and international performances.
- Develop a report of findings and policy recommendations for each state.
- Produce a summary report of data and policy recommendations – information that can help MHEC to identify programming opportunities.

Once the model has been developed user training will be held with key agency personnel in each of the MHEC states. The models and training will be completed by the end of October. All of the cost of building each state’s model under this initiative will be paid by MHEC. In addition, as part of the contract NCHEMS will offer complementary technical assistance and consultation on use of the model for six months after release of the product. For more information contact Chris Rasmussen, MHEC’s vice president for research and policy analysis, at chrir@mhec.org or 612-625-2431.